A

SERMON

PREACH'D before the

LORD-MAYOR,

December 21, 1735.

By JOHN TOTTIE, M.A. *Fellow of* Worcester College *in* Oxford.

[Price Six-pence.]

WILLIAMS Mayor.

At an especial Court, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, *on* Sunday *the 21st Day of* December 1735, *and in the Ninth Year of the Reign of King* George *the Second, of* Great Britain, *&c.*

IT is ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. *Tottie*, for his Sermon this Day preached before them at the said Cathedral Church; and he is desired to print the same.

Jackson.

A View of REASON *and* PASSION, *as in their original and preſent State.*

3.

A

SERMON

Preached before the Right Honourable

The LORD-MAYOR,

ALDERMEN,

AND

SHERIFFS

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON,*

AT THE

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul,*

On SUNDAY, *December* 21, 1735.

By JOHN TOTTIE, *M.A. Fellow of* Worceſter-College *in* Oxford.

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ROM. vii. 23.

But I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members.

THE words, which are ſuppoſed to be ſpoken by St. *Paul* in the perſon of an unregenerated man, do plainly declare, that there are two different laws or principles in human nature, which, tho' there ought to be a ſubordination obſerved, are for ever ſtriving for the maſtery with each other; and that, where our nature is not powerfully aſſiſted, the rebellious principle is too likely to prevail. This is a truth, which has been acknowledged and lamented by the wiſeſt of men in all ages: And who is there amongſt us that is not ready to aſſent to it? or that does not experimentally feel a perpetual conflict betwixt his Reaſon and his Paſſions? And muſt not the very beſt of us, who has made the greateſt improvements in

virtue, be ingenuous enough to own, that it is a work of no ſmall pains and difficulty, to preſerve Reaſon in a capacity of maintaining her ſuperiority? And yet nothing can be in poſſeſſion of a clearer title to it, or of one that in ſpeculation is more univerſally allowed of. A faculty, by which we think, and apprehend, and are conſcious of what paſſes within and without us; which enables us to weigh things in the balance, and to examine their relations and tendencies; to conſider every action in its motive and conſequences; to diſtinguiſh good from evil, the greater from the leſs, the real from the apparent: This faculty, I ſay, ſo far as the abilities of it will ſerve, muſt have an inalienable right to direct, govern, and controul every creature that is endued with it, in every inſtance. Whence then comes it to paſs, that our paſſions, (by which I ſhall at preſent underſtand not only thoſe properly ſo called, but likewiſe in that leſs exact ſenſe of the word, wherein it is ſometimes uſed by moraliſts themſelves, the whole tribe of ſenſitive inclinations, and corporeal affections and impreſſions whatſoever, that are apt to darken and pervert the underſtanding) Whence comes it to paſs, that our paſſions, blind as they are, ſhould yet hurry us away in direct oppoſition to the authority of our reaſon, inſomuch that the condition of humanity has been eſteemed a moſt unreaſonable kind of ſervitude, wherein we are rigorouſly tied up to one

one law, and yet unfortunately under the power of another?

A ſolution of this queſtion had long exerciſed, and always proved an inſuperable difficulty to; human wiſdom; which, after all its efforts, could neither gueſs at the cauſe of the diſtemper, nor find out a means for the cure. The event was, that mens enquiries in this affair generally run them into the moſt abſurd and impious ſuppoſitions; the wild ſuggeſtions of fancy, and at the ſame time, greatly injurious to the Majeſty and Perfection of the Supreme BEING. Some (perhaps from having obſerved how little predominant reaſon was in our conſtitution) would not allow us ſo much as to be the work of an intelligent Being, but ſuppoſed us to be the effect of blind chance, and ſtruck out at random from the jumble of atoms; and ſo might deduce the irregularity of our conduct from the diſagreeing ſeeds of our compoſition. Sometimes, it is well known, recourſe has been had to two oppoſite, independent, ſupreme principles, whereof one is ſuppoſed to have equal power and inclination to create evil and breed confuſion in the world, as the other to promote order and happineſs in it. At other times, the All-gracious GOD of the univerſe has been blaſphemouſly repreſented as an arbitrary and capricious Being, who can feel a pleaſure in the wretchedneſs of his creatures, and created mankind for no other purpoſe, than to divert himſelf with their follies and inconſiſtencies. Theſe, with ſe-

veral other notions no leſs extravagant or impious, can only ſerve to ſhew us, into what abſurdities of error the mind of man may wander, when it is not guided and enlightened by the Spirit of truth. To that let us repair for our ſatisfaction in this important point, and endeavour to learn a true ſtate of the caſe by the only means we can ever poſſibly attain to it, the aſſiſtance of divine revelation. In order to do this, and to vindicate the diſpenſation of Providence, which has been impeached upon this account, it may be neceſſary to enquire,

I. What degree of perfection man may have been ſuppoſed to have been originally poſſeſſed of, with regard to the powers of his mind.

II. To examine how it came to paſs, that man degenerated from his firſt condition, and wherein the nature of that degeneracy conſiſts.

III. To conſider how far the goodneſs of God has put it in the power of mankind to recover their original loſs.

I. *Firſt*, I am to enquire, What degree of perfection man may have been ſuppoſed to have been originally poſſeſſed of, with regard to the powers of his mind.

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The word of truth has informed us, that GOD created man originally in *uprightneſs*; that he *made him a little lower than the angels*; and formed him after his own *image*. Of the Divine Nature a finite being can be but a very imperfect tranſcript at beſt; and therefore, when man is ſaid to have been formed after the Divine Image, we can, in relation to his eſſence, collect no more, than that he was enlightned in his formation by a degree of Reaſon (which is indeed of divine extraction) in ſuch a proportion as was requiſite for a rational creature of ſuch a particular limited capacity. And even of finite rational creatures, man is, for ought we know, the loweſt; ſure we are, that there are many more excellent above him. When therefore he is ſaid to have been created in uprightneſs, it does not infer ſuch a power and rectitude of nature, as if he were a being of pure intellect and unmixt Reaſon; for that indeed would be to make the firſt man and his deſcendants of a different ſpecies. It can only imply, that his nature was as perfect as the very condition of that nature could admit; and that he had it in his power to ſecure to himſelf the poſſeſſion and continuance of all that happineſs, in which he was placed, and for which he was deſigned. Man was doubtleſs from the beginning *ſenſitivo-rationalis*: a reaſonable creature indeed; but made up likewiſe of paſſions and appetites: and conſequently one great perfection of his nature conſiſted in this, that the inferior faculties were uniformly

uniformly regular in obedience and ſubordination to the ſupreme. Reaſon, in its beſt ſtate, could be but human Reaſon; and if it was at firſt more quick-ſighted and penetrating, had a greater ſway and authority than in its preſent ſtate, one great cauſe, next to the innate vigour of the faculty itſelf, might be, not becauſe human nature was devoid of Paſſions, but becauſe thoſe Paſſions offer'd no violence, were no impediment to reaſon; but ſuffered it to exert the full extent of its power, unbiaſs'd, uncorrupted, undiſturb'd. How far under theſe circumſtances the force of man's Reaſon might go, I am neither able nor concerned to determine. I ſhall only remark what more than one, even of the ancient philoſophers, thought they had reaſon to aſſert, That if our minds were entirely free and diſengaged from all influence of Paſſion, and were not injured by corporeal impreſſions, they would as immediately and truly diſcern what was right and wrong in all things relating to human conduct, as the unblemiſhed eye can perceive and diſtinguiſh colours.

And if we look upon the Paſſions under the ſame circumſtances, while they continued in all dutiful ſubjection to their governing principle, they will be ſo far from appearing what ſome have too raſhly pronounced them to be *ſimply and in themſelves evil*; that they will be found to have been implanted in human nature for very wiſe and gracious purpoſes; even

as

as the ſprings of action, and the inlets of innocent pleaſures.

If we conſider them in the former light, we muſt know that pure intelligences alone are actuated by Reaſon only; but beings of a mixt nature have different provinces aſſigned to their different powers. And altho' Reaſon itſelf, even in its preſent incumbrances, does often incite man to action, and did doubtleſs much oftner, when it was in its purer ſtate; yet one chief employment of it ſeems ever to have been, to manage, regulate, and direct to the beſt ends thoſe motions which the Paſſions, the great principles of action, began in the mind, but would want the skill to conduct. Theſe being more liable to be irritated and excited, were moſt proper to impel; while the more ſedate principle, Reaſon, ſat, as a pilot, at the helm, to keep man ſteady in his courſe, and to ſteer him with the greater ſecurity. And what irregularities or diſorders do we think ever could ariſe from the impulſe of the Paſſions, as they were originally implanted in man; when they moved in him no otherwiſe than as the winds in the garden wherein he was placed, never violent and tempeſtuous, but gently working in the moral world, as the other in the natural, preventing the mind from ſtagnating in reſt and inactivity?

Beſides this, there was another great end, for which the beneficent Author of nature inſerted the Paſſions in the human mind, which was, that they might be the inlets of innocent pleaſures.

pleaſures. For altho' pleaſures purely intellectual, and ſuch as flow from the due exerciſe of Reaſon alone, are allowed to be more exalted in their kind, and more refined in their nature, than others; yet pleaſures of an inferior order are by no means to be excluded or condemned, ſince they ariſe from the very condition of humanity. If man had been form'd, like the angels, ſpiritual and incorporeal, he would indeed have been incapable of having any perception of other than ſpiritual pleaſures: but as one part of him only came down from heaven, and the other was formed out of the duſt of the earth; and as from the union of ſoul and body do reſult paſſions and bodily inclinations; the gratification of them muſt be ſo far from being deſtructive of the conſtitution of human nature, that one part of man's happineſs muſt neceſſarily conſiſt therein. And as it is evident, that man, for ſome part at leaſt of his duration, was deſigned to be an inhabitant of the earth; it was therefore a gracious proviſion in his Creator, to accommodate him with ſuch faculties, as were beſt calculated to make his ſituation agreeable to him, and to ſweeten his journey thro' life. But ſtill more conſpicuous will the Divine Goodneſs appear in the formation of man, when we reflect that his own nature, and the relation he bore to things about him, were conſtituted in ſuch a manner, that what was deſigned to promote his happineſs, might by no means prove a ſnare or an occaſion unto him of falling; ſince the Paſſions of man could never

never receive ſo full and perfect a gratification, as when they were obedient to the law, and ſubmitted themſelves to the direction of Reaſon. This is even ſtill in general the caſe, tho' things are much altered for the worſe; and without doubt, had man continued in his native perfection, all the pleaſurable enjoyments that human nature was capable of, would have been uniformly and unexceptionably coincident with right Reaſon, and agreeable to the practice of virtue.

And now, upon a review, who would not even almoſt envy the condition of our firſt parent? Created in innocence, bleſt with every uſeful power, and crown'd with all the perfection that his nature was capable of? An exact harmony ſubſiſting between all his faculties, all mutually conſpiring to make his happineſs complete: his Reaſon vigorous, clear and ſerene; his Paſſions moderate, contented, pleaſing: Reaſon not condemning the extravagance of Paſſion; nor Paſſion ever murmuring at the authority of Reaſon: *No law in his members warring againſt the law of his mind*; no variance betwixt duty and inclination; no thwarting and contradiction betwixt underſtanding and ſenſe. So abundantly gracious and bountiful was the LORD unto man in his creation: happy would it have been for him and his poſterity, had he been as kind to himſelf. But the innocence and perfection of his nature were inſeparably united to each other; and the one was forfeited, when the other was loſt. This conſidera-

tion will lead me to the ſecond part of my enquiry, namely,

II. How it came to paſs, that man degenerated from his firſt condition, and wherein the nature of that degeneracy conſiſts.

How perfect ſoever we may ſuppoſe human nature to have been, and how well ſoever accommodated to perpetuate all the felicity the capacity of it could contain; yet it could not be, that it ſhould have had ſuch an abſolute degree of perfection, as that a diminution of it muſt have been a natural impoſſibility. That is the ſole prerogative of the Infinite BEING, who is *the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever*; and is what every finite creature whatever advances it may have made towards perfection, muſt fall infinitely ſhort of. The angels, we know, tranſgreſſed, and fell from their exalted ſtate: man therefore, that was lower than the angels, might alſo by tranſgreſſion fall from his. Human Reaſon, which never was of that kind which neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps, could not always be vigilant or ſecure. A crafty tempter, who knew every avenue to the ſoul, might attack it in an unguarded hour, and might prove but too ſucceſsful in his malicious attempt: In effect, ſuch was the event: the ſtratagem of the tempter took place, and the deſtruction of man's nature was accompliſhed under the ſpecious plea of carrying it to a divine perfection. Man nevertheleſs could have nothing to juſtify his conduct; and but little

little to offer even in extenuation of his crime. No temptation could be pleaded in excuſe of a violation of the plain and poſitive command of GOD; which was moreover guarded by a terrible denunciation, importing the conſequences of his tranſgreſſion, in order to imprint more deeply on his mind that important truth, which, by the divine appointment, is founded in the nature of things, *that ſin is the never-failing ſource of woe.* Such indeed was it to man, in an exemplary degree; and that it might be branded with the ſevereſt marks of God's diſpleaſure, it was puniſhed with conſequences even more than merely natural, ſince not only the faculties of man were impair'd, but even the earth itſelf felt a curſe for the guilt of its inhabitant.

The ſhare of puniſhment that human nature underwent, let our own experience and conſciences declare; for however unable we may be to form to ourſelves a true notion of its original perfection, a ſenſe of the depravity of it muſt be in every one's breaſt, becauſe all muſt know what they feel. Let us then ask ourſelves, if we do not perceive our nobleſt faculty, that of Reaſon, (notwithſtanding all that pride and prejudice can ſuggeſt) to be, when left to itſelf, an uncertain guide, weak and dubious, encumber'd with difficulties, diſtracted with contrary opinions, frequently aſſenting to the wrong, and the more ſelf-ſufficient, the more liable to miſtake. As materials are collected for the exerciſe and improvement of it

by ſlow and painful degrees, here a little, and there a little; ſo, after a tedious courſe of diſcipline, it is often found to have gained but little ſtrength, and to have made no progreſs, that can be boaſted of, in any uſeful knowledge. How often is it the buſineſs of our riper years, to correct the wrong impreſſions we had received, and reſted ſatisfied with in our more early ones; and the task frequently unfiniſh'd, even when our grey hairs appear? And after all, where it has made the greateſt improvements, and has been moſt fortunate in its enquiries; where it has been directed to the right way, and would conduct us in it; how impotent is it to influence the will, ſo as to make us act where we think aright? We are cool to its advice, regardleſs of its admonitions, and rebellious to its authority, even where there are no ſtrong temptations to withdraw us from our allegiance; much more, when our impetuous Paſſions ariſe, and ſilence the ſtill voice of Reaſon. For they are no longer under the guidance and controul of that ſuperior principle; but *the law in our members, warring againſt the law of our mind, has brought us into captivity to the law of ſin.* For muſt we not own, that where our Reaſon is not abſolutely gain'd over to the dominion and intereſt of our Paſſions, where it is not even proſtituted to inflame them, (which is too often the caſe, tho' certainly the moſt abject and deplorable condition, that a reaſonable creature can fall into) Muſt we not own, that where our Reaſon

does

does its utmoſt to maintain the little remains of its authority, that it meets with an almoſt conſtant and vigorous oppoſition from the Paſſions; that the conflict is too unequal betwixt them; that we are led captive of our luſts againſt the cleareſt conviction of our minds, and, at the ſame time that we condemn and deplore, do ſtill purſue our infelicity?

Let me by no means be thought to repreſent human nature worſe than it is, or to aggravate the miſeries of our condition; but if we will be dealt with ſincerely, (and flattery will not mend the matter) this is in truth the ſtate of the caſe; this is the wretched condition of humanity in its degeneracy and corruption; ſufficient cauſe of humiliation to every conſiderate mind, though the boaſted ſtrength and pride of infidelity. But it is the peculiar character of folly, to be always ſelf-ſufficient; and none are ſo apt to reject the kind offers of aſſiſtance, as thoſe who, through the weakneſs of underſtanding, want it the moſt. If indeed the difference betwixt the wiſe and the unwiſe conſiſted only in this: That the one had a ſenſe and feeling of the depravity of his nature; but was withal in an utter incapacity of relieving himſelf; and the other was totally blind to imperfections in themſelves incurable; the ſtate of the latter would certainly be moſt eligible. But ſince the goodneſs of GOD is ſuch, that he has in his wrath remember'd mercy; and, by means that could not have entered into the heart of man to conceive, has put it in our power to

recover

recover the original perfection of our nature, in such a measure, as to prepare us, by the improvement of it here, for a more exalted degree of perfection and happiness hereafter; every man that is not anxious to enquire after these means, and is not eager joyfully to embrace them when found, must for ever give up all pretensions to the name of Rational. This enquiry I proposed to be the subject of the latter part of my discourse; namely,

III. By what gracious method mankind was put in a capacity of recovering themselves from their forlorn condition; and how far the means are effectual to bring about this great end.

No sooner had man transgressed, and the just sentence of condemnation had passed upon him, his mind yet full of the horrors of his guilt, and punishment severely aggravated by the reflection of its being necessarily entailed upon his posterity; but GOD was pleased to relieve his insupportable weight of grief, by the prospect of a mighty Saviour and Deliverer to come, in that remarkable assurance, *That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.* At distant times, and to different persons, the gracious promise was renewed; and, as the time of his appearance approached, the declarations concerning him were more clear and circumstantial. A superior dignity of person; the manner of his being brought into the world; the time of his appearance in it; the offices he was to discharge; the lowly estate he

should

ſhould aſſume amongſt men; and the barbarous indignities he would undergo, which were to terminate in a ſhameful death; are all diſtinctly foretold, that the world might not be at a loſs to acknowledge its Deliverer, and might rejoice in the greatneſs of its ſalvation. But what heart can conceive, or tongue expreſs, the depth of the riches of the goodneſs of GOD to mankind, when the Perſon engaged in the great work of atonement and reconciliation appears to be no leſs than the SON of GOD himſelf; who united the Divine Nature to the Human, that he might by the one be the proper repreſentative of thoſe for whom the redemption was wrought, and by the other, give a price to thoſe ſtripes by which all mankind were to be healed. The ranſom and propitiation was, by the ſacrifice of CHRIST; a doctrine ever to be inſiſted on as the very foundation of Chriſtianity: but my preſent undertaking rather leads me to conſider, how far the means he has furniſhed us withal, as the Author of our religion, and which we muſt conſtantly remember are by his death alone rendered effectual to ſalvation, can contribute to rectify the depravity of human nature in its preſent ſtate: which is no more than a neceſſary preparation in order to its being carried to a more glorious and ſupernatural perfection in a future. The original excellency and rectitude of man's nature has been before obſerved to ariſe in a great meaſure from the power of his Reaſon, and the due ſubjection of his Paſſions; and on the

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contrary, the degeneracy of it to consist in the influence that the Passions have gained to enfeeble and pervert his Reason. Whatever therefore can supply us with the best means to reduce them as far as possible to their ancient state, so far as it is available to that purpose, must have a proportionable tendency to rectify the depravity of our nature. Now that Christianity does furnish us with the best aids imaginable to accomplish this work, will appear, if we consider, that it contains the truest system of knowledge to improve and guide our Reason, and moreover fortifies it with the strongest motives and assistance to subdue and regulate our Passions.

First, Let us briefly enquire how far our Reason is indebted to Christianity in point of religious instruction.

Let the advocates for the sufficiency of human Reason deal ingenuously, and tell us, how far the strength of that alone has been able to carry mankind independent of Divine Revelation; and then we shall be the better able to judge, what improvements it has actually received from Revelation. And in this case, I must reject all instances from later systems (as they are called) of natural Religion; because (beside that in several momentous points, the best of them are manifestly deficient) most of the important truths which are there delineated, however put off under a philosophical dress, were imbib'd and first received, as they have indeed their sanction, from Revelation;

and

and ſurely it is a very unfair way of proceeding, to argue from the aſſent to, or uſe that may be made of truths thus diſcovered, to the diſcovery of thoſe truths itſelf. And even in relation to the great maſters of Reaſon in ancient days, it may not be eaſy to determine how far even they might have been ſupplied with notions handed down in an imperfect manner, by tradition, from an original Revelation; which, as a *light*, faintly *ſhining in a dark place*, might ſerve, if not to diſſipate the obſcurity, yet to fix their view, and to preſerve them from deviating into any groſs abſurdities and errors. However to theſe let us appeal, and ſee how far they could trace out, by the force of their Reaſon, (for it is plain, that in many caſes, their own Reaſon alone did direct them) the true principles of Religion, or ſettle a rule of conduct.

Now of theſe, ſome by the dint of reaſoning had argued themſelves out of the belief of the very Being of a GOD. Others, who profeſſed to own his exiſtence, did yet in reality deny it, by diſallowing his Providence, and his moſt eſſential Attributes. And even the moſt zealous advocates for a DEITY, when they came to explain their notions, ſuppoſed him, after all their refinements, ſtill to be but of a more exalted kind of matter; that is to ſay, (if their reaſonings were fairly purſued) of ſuch a nature as did

in effect deſtroy the very ſuppoſition they would ſupport *. Nay, and thoſe that ſeem to have entertained the beſt and moſt worthy notions of the Divine Nature, do not appear ſo firm and ſettled in their opinions, as not ſometimes to admit doubts and ſcruples in their own minds concerning it: even Plato has been perhaps not unjuſtly charged with inconſtancy in this very particular.

However, it is certain, that this may truly be affirmed of all the ſects of Philoſophers in general, that whatever their own Religious notions were, they ſerved indeed for the ſubject of ſpeculative debate and contention, but were never effectually applied to the moral improvement either of themſelves or others. So far from it, that open Immorality was the profeſſion of one ſect, who affirmed ſenſual pleaſures to be the greateſt good. The reſt of them had ſome particular vices to patronize; and, as the authority of all was equal, every one that affected philoſophy (which yet

* It is not here meant, that the belief of a GOD, and his Providence, muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe a true Philoſophical notion of the Divine Eſſence: It is well known, that ſome of the primitive chriſtian writers thought the Deity to be Corporeal. But we muſt conſider, that there is a wide difference betwixt the Metaphyſical Errors of One who is already thoroughly convinced, as a chriſtian, of the Being of a GOD, and of One, who is to eſtabliſh this belief upon his own Philoſophical Principles: for if in this latter caſe They ſhould fail, the fabric of His Religion, that has no other ſupport, muſt fall to the ground.

few

few had either opportunity, or capacity, or inclination to underſtand) might adhere to that ſcheme of it which he liked beſt, and juſtify the indulgence of all or any favourite Paſſion, even by the principles of his ſect. * One indeed more than ordinary genius has been much extolled by the Patrons of Reaſon, and been recommended as one that had not only clearer notions of the principles and duties of religion, but had likewiſe more concern for the practice of it, than they own the reſt to have had; and yet, I fear, he too will begin to ſink in their eſteem, when they reflect that he acknowledged and greatly lamented his own ignorance and uncertainty, concerning things of the higheſt and moſt univerſal importance, and ardently wiſhed for what they enjoy, and yet neglect, the aſſiſtance of a Divine Revelation. That is, after all, the unerring rule, that muſt teach the ſimple, and direct the wiſe: containing things ſublime indeed, and myſterious, becauſe it diſcovers truths that are ſo in their nature; yet clear, and plain, and obvious, as a rule of duty, becauſe Religion was deſigned to be the univerſal ſcience of mankind. By this the ſtudious and the learned may enlarge their thoughts, elevate their contemplation, encreaſe their knowledge, and aſcertain their notions: By this even the illiterate and the mechanick

* *Socrates.*

may learn the true ſtate of their condition, and the whole compaſs of their duty; the only neceſſary knowledge, and wherein the meaneſt Chriſtian has the advantage of the moſt able Philoſopher. For whatever is there declared, does not depend upon the precarious deciſions of human Reaſon or human Authority, to be admitted or rejected at pleaſure; but is ſure and infallible, carrying with it irreſiſtible conviction and power, as it was confirmed by the immediate teſtimony of Heaven, and is not of men, but of GOD. And worthy of GOD: for where do we find the great principles of religion ſo fully and clearly explained either in regard to belief or practice; while faith has a natural tendency to improve us in morality, and morality is itſelf refined? Whence can we form to ourſelves ſo juſt a conception of the nature and perfections of GOD? What beſides could have certainly informed us of the relations we bear to him, and of the homage he requires us to pay? Where elſe can man ever learn that important leſſon, *to know himſelf*, in regard both to the dignity and infirmities of his nature, and from that knowledge, to direct his aims, and to purſue his happineſs? How could he otherwiſe have been aſſured, wherein his Final happineſs conſiſted; or what were the neceſſary means of attaining it? What had graciouſly been done on GOD's part, and what remained to be done on his own? All theſe things

things are ſo diſtinctly revealed, and the obligation of our duty is ſo certain, and the rule of it ſo complete, that whatever reparation all neceſſary knowledge can make to human Reaſon, or whatever forces that can aſſiſt it withal, to reſtore it to its ancient dominion over the Paſſions, have been abundantly ſupplied by Chriſtianity.

But the attainment of knowledge is but a neceſſary ſtep to a more important work, namely, the conformity of our actions to that knowledge: and to bring this about, Reaſon, alas! let it be ever ſo well inſtructed, often finds itſelf to be too feeble and impotent. It does perhaps clearly enough apprehend and acknowledge the good that ought to be followed, and knows the method of attaining to it, but cannot always determine the will to the purſuit of it. "Let a man "(ſays one * who had well conſidered human "underſtanding) be never ſo well perſuaded "of the advantages of virtue, that it is as ne- "ceſſary to a man, who has any great aims in "this world, or hopes in the next, as food "to life; yet till he hungers and thirſts after "righteouſneſs, till he feels an uneaſineſs in "the want of it, his Will will not be deter- "mined to any action in purſuit of this con- "feſſed greater good; but any other uneaſi- "neſs he feels in himſelf ſhall take place, and

* *Locke's* Eſſay, *B. 2. ch. 21. § 35.*

"carry

" carry his will to other actions." Now this uneaſineſs, which is ſo apt to be humoured at the expence of our Reaſon, is created by the ſtimulation of irregular deſires: it will not therefore be ſufficient to have our Reaſon rightly informed, unleſs there be alſo an effectual reſtraint put upon the *ſenſual appetites*; and unleſs by a due influence to work upon the *Paſſions properly ſo called*, there is a conviction wrought in the heart as well as the judgment: And it will conſequently appear to the great advantage of Chriſtianity, if it be found to have a peculiar efficacy in both theſe reſpects. For here it will be neceſſary to obſerve the diſtinction betwixt the Senſual Appetites and the Paſſions; inaſmuch as of the former no more is to be deſired than that they would always act in obedience to Reaſon, without injuring or obſtructing it; but the latter, moreover, may even join with it in the ſame ſpiritual cauſe, and be active and aſſiſting in carrying on the ſame work. And it muſt always be eſteemed a very uſeful part of religion, ſince Reaſon, in its beſt improvements, is found inſufficient to determine the Will aright, to bring over the Paſſions to its intereſts, to unite them in the ſame glorious views, and to make even thoſe powers of the mind, which are ſo apt to be at enmity with Reaſon, its friends and aſſociates. For it is in vain to think, that the fitneſs of things, or the beauty of virtue, or any other merely intellectual

tellectual motive ſhould alone have a general influence to rectify human conduct. So long as the Paſſions are a part, and a very active part too of our conſtitution, they will have employment; and, if not directed by proper means to their proper objects, will be very likely to fix themſelves, and carry our deſires along with them, upon ſuch as are at hand, and are oftentimes moſt unworthy. For which reaſon, it is the ſingular excellence of our religion, that it is moſt prevalent to withdraw the Paſſions, as much as poſſible, from the baſe or trifling objects they are converſant with here below, to fix them principally upon ſuch as it is our true and everlaſting intereſt to purſue. When, beſide the reaſonableneſs of our duty to engage us to the diſcharge of it, there is moreover a mighty reward, glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal happineſs, ſet before us; how muſt it work upon every generous paſſion, to raiſe our views, and determine us immoveably in our choice? When, on the contrary, ſin and diſobedience do not only appear wrong in themſelves, but likewiſe amazingly dreadful in their conſequences; and not only the commands, but the terrors of the LORD perſuade, threatning indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil; how muſt all our averſions take the alarm, and make us deteſt and ſhun what we might otherwiſe purſue, tho' we con-

condemned? In ſhort, our holy religion does by a variety of motives, adapted to the Paſſions as well as the Reaſon of mankind, endeavour to engage them all in the cauſe of virtue; whilſt they are ſeverally influenced, according to their reſpective natures, by the greateſt final good, or greateſt evil; and do accordingly determine the will, by raiſing proportionable deſires or averſions in the mind. And ſo long as theſe deſires and averſions, thus raiſed and directed to their proper objects, are kept alive in our hearts, we ſhall have comparatively no appetite or reliſh for any thing, but what tends to our ſupreme happineſs; no vicious or depraved longings; but ſhall as certainly hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, as they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs are ſure to be filled.

Eſpecially, if to this we add, what it is another particular excellency of Chriſtianity to effect, the regulation and ſubjection of our ſenſual appetites: a thing ſo ſtrongly inſiſted upon by our religion, that it is a neceſſary qualification of being a faithful diſciple of Chriſt's; as it will be impoſſible to make any conſiderable progreſs towards Chriſtian perfection, ſo long as we are under the dominion of our ſinful luſts. But as it appears, that the ſenſe of an obligation, tho' clear and evident, is not always ſtrong enough to enforce it; eſpecially where temptations are pleaſing, and have perhaps been long gaining ſtrength from an unin-

uninterrupted compliance; we have moreover all the directions that are useful, and all the assistance that can be wanted, to give our duty the ascendant over our corrupt inclinations. As our danger generally arises from our security, our religion prescribes to us in a particular manner Watchfulness and Prayer; by the one, to secure ourselves from surprize or delusion; and by the other, to fix in our minds an habitual sense of our duty, and to render ourselves fit objects of that grace and assistance we implore. Even the more severe injunction of Mortification and Self-denial, which has been thought to bear too hard upon the character of a gracious Lawgiver, will upon examination be found to be no other than kind and wholsome discipline. For a little acquaintance with our own nature may teach us, that we are apt to grow upon indulgence; and, as the extreme bounds of virtue do insensibly run into vice, so it will be the part of discretion not to give ourselves leave to expatiate as far as the widest limits even of lawful pleasures will permit; but to restrain ourselves sometimes even from innocent enjoyments, that we may be accustomed to command ourselves, and may, by this kind of exercise, either prevent all irregular sollicitations, or at least be better enabled to withstand them.

But lest, after all, our unruly Passions and appetites should prove too obstinate to be sub-

duced by a ſenſe of duty, or any prudential methods the Divine Wiſdom has preſcribed; GOD has vouchſafed, in compaſſion to the infirmities of our nature, to promiſe it the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit; which, if we reject not its gracious overtures, is perpetually employ'd in inſtilling good motions into our ſouls, in co-operating with our better part, and fortifying it againſt theſe our moſt dangerous, becauſe moſt agreeable enemies. This indeed is the peculiar advantage and glory of our religion; that the bleſſed Author of it has promiſed to all thoſe who ſincerely embrace it, and devoutly make uſe of the means thereby preſcribed, an abundant meaſure and increaſe of his Grace; without which, all our ſufficiency is weakneſs, and all our endeavours after perfection will be vain and ineffectual. This it is, which muſt make the knowledge of our duty uſeful, the practice of it eaſy, and the motives to it prevalent; as it is this alone which can ſtrengthen our reaſon, can purify the corrupt part of our natures, refine and exalt our paſſions, and ſpiritualize our affections. This it is, which finiſhes the Chriſtian; who, when it has taken poſſeſſion of his ſoul, and united itſelf to his very nature, will then, and not till then, have an exquiſite ſenſe of the excellence, and taſte the pleaſures of religion. For then ſhall the commandments of GOD be his delight, yea, ſweeter than honey unto his mouth; duty and inclination

nation ſhall go hand in hand; and *the war betwixt the law in his members, and the law of his mind, ſhall ceaſe:* His nature ſhall be renewed and carried to the higheſt degree of perfection that it is capable of in its preſent ſtate; till He that has purified him from ſin, ſhall raiſe him incorruptible from the grave, and complete his happineſs in glory, which was begun in obedience and grace.

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